

St John's Green Primary School

St John's Green, Colchester, Essex CO2 7HE

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- St John's Green Primary School continues to provide pupils with a good education which prepares them well for their secondary education.
- The headteacher, his leadership team and governors are ambitious for the success of their pupils. Throughout the transition from a single site school to a dual site school, their vision for excellence has not waived.
- Governors hold the headteacher and his leadership team to account effectively and commend them for their successes.
- Leaders have embedded a strong focus on teaching and learning within the school. As a result, staff plan exciting, purposeful activities to engage and develop pupils' skills, understanding and knowledge.
- From their differing starting points, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress across the curriculum.
- Leaders and staff provide tailored support which meets the needs of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Consequently, these pupils make good progress across the curriculum.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy reading and have many opportunities to develop and extend their reading choices across the curriculum.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are exemplary. Pupils are attentive and eager to learn.
- Pupils thrive at the school and are kept safe. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe both online and in the outside world.
- The curriculum is engaging and well rounded. Pupils gain many opportunities to develop skills in a range of subject areas such as French, Makaton and music.
- Staff develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding exceptionally well. Pupils have a heightened understanding of the needs of others and their role as citizens in 21st-century Britain.
- Children in Reception receive outstanding support to develop their key skills, understanding and knowledge of the world around them.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not consistently make the same level of progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers do not consistently provide guidance for writing in all areas of the curriculum to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the teaching and learning of writing so that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make at least the same level of progress as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Ensure that teachers provide guidance for writing in all areas of the curriculum that clearly promotes pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, alongside his leadership team, has created a culture whereby all staff endeavour to provide high-quality teaching and learning for pupils. He ensures that all staff receive high-quality professional development. As a result, staff feel supported and well prepared to deliver high-quality lessons to all pupils. Staff responding to the Ofsted staff survey overwhelmingly agreed the school has improved since the last inspection.
- Leaders' robust and frequent analysis of data ensures that they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. All staff and governors are aware of the current priorities and how to achieve them.
- Leaders' regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning ensures that where additional support is needed, it is provided swiftly, effectively and collaboratively. As a consequence, staff unanimously stated in their questionnaire that they were proud to be a member of the school. As a result of the vision and support of leaders, staff retention is strong.
- Middle leaders are committed to strengthening the delivery of their respective subject areas. Each subject area has a strongly defined curriculum that matches the needs of pupils. Leaders benefit from sharing expertise and approaches. Linked to whole-school priorities, they have embedded clear tracking systems to monitor the successes and areas for development of each pupil.
- The curriculum is engaging and well rounded. Pupils throughout the school have the opportunity to gain a range of valuable skills, understanding and knowledge. For example, pupils study French, music, history, humanities and science. Pupils gain a strong understanding of the historical heritage of the town of Colchester. Pupils speak and write avidly about the Roman history that surrounds their school.
- Pupils also have many opportunities to develop through extra-curricular visits and clubs such as dance and art clubs.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. British values inform the ways in which the school council is run through democratic elections which provide a platform for free speech. School council members draw on the ideas posed by their fellow pupils in their classes, thereby providing every pupil in the school with a voice.
- The school is very inclusive. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities receive bespoke support that meets their needs. Leaders manage the provision well and ensure that both pupils and parents are involved in determining and reviewing targets and progress. As a result, pupils make progress in line with other pupils nationally.
- Leaders ensure that the needs of disadvantaged pupils are prioritised. Additional funding is used to support pupils in class with extra support and to ensure that they participate in extra-curricular opportunities to enrich their understanding of the world. Recognising the importance of reading for pleasure in transforming pupils' learning experiences, leaders have issued disadvantaged pupils with bags of brand-new, high-quality books and a bookshelf on which to keep them. Disadvantaged pupils currently

make progress in line with other pupils nationally.

- The use of the primary physical education and sport premium has been effective in engaging pupils in a range of sports such as inter-school sports competitions. Pupils understand the link between exercise, nutrition and their health. All pupils, including children in Reception, receive specialist physical education (PE) teaching which has improved their skills and understanding of a range of sports.
- The relationship with parents is very positive. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school. Parents are very complimentary about the school's leadership. One parent stated that, 'The school has exceeded expectations: it's very well organised, caring and well led.' Parents also praised the 'excellent' communications provided by the school.
- Leaders are proactive in ensuring that the school gains from collaboration with local schools in the Colchester consortium. Training, sharing of expertise and moderation are areas that the school has benefited from.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide effective challenge to the headteacher and the leadership team. They are frequent visitors to the school and gather a range of pertinent information to inform their understanding. Alongside the headteacher and leadership team, they are committed to providing a high-quality education for all pupils.
- They use assessment information about pupils' achievements effectively. They pose challenging questions of the headteacher and the leadership team to ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education.
- Governors' oversight of the school budget is strong. They ensure that spending decisions are driven by the best interests of the pupils. For example, the school's focus on reading has required significant investment in high-quality texts. As a result, many pupils enjoy reading for pleasure.
- Governors review the expenditure for disadvantaged pupils and the sports premium funding to ensure that pupils benefit from the additional activities.
- Governors ensure that pupils are safe by regularly reviewing the school's safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- School leaders, staff and governors undertake regular safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training. Staff are acutely aware of their duty to keep children safe and the processes by which they can make a referral.
- Safeguarding leads are vigilant in ensuring the physical safety and emotional well-being of their pupils. They are tenacious in referring to external agencies. The school has a full-time family support worker whose work has had measurable impact on outcomes for the most vulnerable children in the school's care.
- Documentation relating to the suitability of staff, governors and regular volunteers is compliant and reviewed regularly.

- Parents who responded to Parent View unanimously stated their confidence in the school's ability to keep their children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils and staff have very positive relationships which help to create a harmonious learning environment throughout the school.
- Staff ask challenging questions which pupils respond to with relish. Pupils develop a love for learning and embrace the challenges posed in different subjects across the curriculum.
- Teachers ensure that tasks and activities are designed to extend and develop all pupils' skills. For example, inspectors observed the teaching of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, in small groups with focused, tailored resources and questioning in mathematics.
- Pupils are eager, considerate, thoughtful learners. They use collaborative talk well to support and extend their understanding. Inspectors observed pupils respond to other pupils' writing in a Year 6 class with empathy and constructive feedback.
- Teachers use information about pupils' prior learning to inform their planning. Teachers are alert to changes in pupils' progress and level of achievement and adapt their lessons accordingly. Senior leaders' priorities and achievement plans drawn from analysis of pupil data are embedded in teachers' planning to ensure that pupils make as much progress as possible.
- The teaching of reading is a strength. Pupils develop strong phonics skills in key stage 1 and Reception. Pupils also develop critical skills to enable them to understand the themes and ideas in texts. High-quality texts such as Michael Morpurgo's 'Kensuke's kingdom' in Year 5 underpin the themes explored in many areas of the curriculum. Vibrant book corners are in every classroom and standalone libraries encourage pupils to read for pleasure.
- Pupils and staff respond well to additional challenge across the curriculum. Pupils told the inspector how much they appreciated the opportunities to be study difficult concepts in different subject areas such as mathematics and science.
- Learning support assistants provide very effective support to pupils. They receive regular training which enables them to pose challenging questions that help pupils to develop understanding.
- The teaching of mathematics is highly effective. Pupils in all year groups receive teaching that meets their needs. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' understanding and ability to articulate how they arrived at mathematical solutions. As a result, pupils make good progress in mathematics.
- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not make as much progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. However, inspectors observed newly adopted approaches to writing whereby pupils make swift progress. Teachers embed the study of grammar in the teaching of writing to enable pupils to become self-conscious writers.
- Teachers' guidance for writing in all areas of the curriculum does not identify clearly

pupils' next steps to ensure that they make rapid progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. An overwhelming number of parents state that their children are well supported emotionally and pastorally by the school. One parent stated, for example, that children 'have been encouraged to think about different cultures and talk more openly about difficult subjects such as the London terrorist attacks with sensitivity'.
- Pupils develop critical debating skills about citizenship and the rights of a child on the global stage. For example, pupils debate the horror of child soldiers in some parts of the world. The school is currently applying to UNICEF for a Rights Respecting Schools Award. As a result, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child underpins many assemblies and classroom debate.
- Pupils are given a great deal of responsibility in the school. For example, Year 4 pupils are appointed as play leaders to support Year 2 pupils in the playground. Pupils from both year groups told the inspector how much they valued this opportunity to support each other.
- Disadvantaged pupils are given additional leadership roles to develop their resilience and confidence. In addition, the school is divided into small teams called families and the leader of each family is a pupil. Inspectors observed the powerful way in which these pupil leaders managed discussions during assembly. As a result, the focus on rights and responsibilities became meaningful and purposeful as all pupils were involved in the debate.
- The school council demonstrates how British values are embedded in the school. Pupils are elected democratically and take their representation very seriously. They discuss issues with their class and bring their views to the school council.
- Pupils have exceptional attitudes towards learning. Pupils are continually focused and eager to learn. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson the inspector observed pupils engrossed in editing their writing independently.
- Pupils understand how to keep safe when online and are appreciative of the ways in which the school helps them to understand the potential dangers of the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils state categorically that they feel safe and well-cared-for. They are able to define bullying but state that it happens infrequently and is resolved swiftly.
- Children learn the school's values that promote good behaviour when they join the school.
- Pupils' conduct both in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Staff promote the school values of kindness and respect. They lead by example.

- Pupils work and play together exceptionally well. Behaviour is impeccable. They demonstrate kindness and attentiveness to the needs of others throughout their time at school.
- Pupils' work is neat and presented well, exemplifying pride in their work.
- Attendance is above average and pupils are very punctual to school and lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- From variable starting points, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, made progress that was significantly above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1 in 2016. They made substantial progress in science and other subjects as well.
- Through highly focused teaching and assessment, the proportion of children who make a good level of development has risen significantly between 2014 and 2016 to above the national average.
- The most able pupils made accelerated progress in reading in 2016 and 2017 in key stage 2. The school has maintained a steadfast focus on reading throughout the curriculum. High-quality texts underpin the delivery of the theme-driven curriculum and pupils are encouraged to read for pleasure. In 2016, all pupils made progress in line with the national average.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 was robust in 2016 and 2017. The school has undergone significant expansion which has brought an enhanced focus on developing children's reading, writing, and mathematics skills in Reception. Pupils' work in their books and the school's information about pupils' progress show that current pupils are on track to achieve well across the curriculum at both key stages.
- In the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2016, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard was above the national average.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make progress in line with pupils nationally. They receive tailored support that is reviewed regularly.
- Progress in mathematics at key stage 2 was in line with the national average. Middle- and higher-attaining pupils attained significantly above the national average in 2016 and 2017.
- Disadvantaged pupils' progress in writing and mathematics at key stage 2 was below the national average in 2016 and 2017.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- In 2016 and 2017, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development by the end of Reception was above the national average. Current assessment information indicates that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is likely to increase further by the end of this year.
- Leaders know the needs of the children very well. Through the screening of every child's language ability on entry to Reception, they identify children's needs swiftly and

appropriately. They have employed three full-time speech and language therapists to provide tailored support to accelerate children's language skills. As a result, children, including disadvantaged children, make accelerated progress.

- Children respond exceptionally well to staff expectations. Their achievements in key stage 1 are testament to the focused approach in Reception. Children learn about the importance of kindness, respect and courtesy. They also learn to maintain attention and to be resilient in their learning.
- Staff develop children's phonics skills exceptionally well. Children make rapid progress in phonics through highly effective teaching tailored to the needs of children.
- Children develop critical reading skills very well. The inspector observed children in three Reception classes developing perceptive understanding of symbolism in films which they applied to their own lives. Through skilful questioning and modelling, staff developed children's critical reasoning about the emotions of characters in the film and the impact of colour and specific features on the responses of the viewer.
- Staff provide a range of stimulating activities both indoors and outdoors to develop and extend children's core skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening and motor skills. Children are highly engaged by these activities and maintain their concentration.
- Leadership of the early years is a strength that has been recognised by the Colchester Schools Consortium as the school leads the early years hub. They are able to share their expertise, support training and support the moderation of assessments.
- The relationship with parents is very strong. They inform the initial assessment alongside commenting on their children's online learning journal throughout the year. They attend a monthly open morning to gain a clearer understanding of how to support their children. Parents who responded to Parent View were highly complimentary of the early years provision, with one saying, 'we are encouraged to be part of the learning... open days and seminars to improve the input into the child's education'.

School details

Unique reference number	114711
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10036213

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	449
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Roberts
Headteacher	Simon Billings
Telephone number	01206 762884
Website	www.st-johns-green.eschools.co.uk
Email address	admin@st-johnsgreen.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger than an average-sized primary school. The school is split over two sites.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average.
- The overall proportion of pupils who receive support for their SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in Reception, key stage 1 and key stage 2 jointly with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher; deputy headteacher; the leaders of mathematics, English, science, early years, SEN and/or disabilities and leaders of religious education, geography, phonics and PE; five governors; the school improvement partner; pupils and teachers.
- Pupils' books and records of their progress were scrutinised.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed their reading experiences with them.
- Account was taken of parent and staff responses to inspectors.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's development plan and analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, safeguarding policies and records, and records made by leaders on the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Paul Hughes	Ofsted Inspector
Henry Weir	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Ayling	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Jones	Ofsted Inspector

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